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Interview with police psychologist in the Czech Republic

Police were called to a man running around the garden firing a handgun around him. The man's elderly mother called for help. Officers immediately used loudspeakers to tell all residents of the residential area to stay indoors and stay away from the windows. Other police forces cordoned off the area so that no cars or random pedestrians could access the event. The police immediately called the emergency services with a doctor in case of a gunshot wound. As the man was not communicating and was a threat to his surroundings, a specialist police unit was called in. As the unit approached, the man opened fire on them. The unit was forced to return fire and hit the man twice. When the man was disarmed and the scene was safe, emergency services were immediately called and prepared the man for transport to the hospital. After transporting the patient, the police reopened the area and declared the possibility of free movement and leaving the house again. Immediate witnesses to the incident who were in contact with the perpetrator were offered the possibility of crisis intervention with a police psychologist who also arrived at the scene.

What was your direction in this intervention?

My job as part of this event was to provide crisis intervention by involving persons who came into direct contact with the perpetrator. Most at risk was the shooter's mother, who was in the house and called for help for her son. She saw with her own eyes how her son had been shot and his life was in imminent danger.

What was important in the intervention?

I see it as crucial that she was not left alone in the house after the procedure. There was relatively a lot of blood on the site and I thought it was better not to expose it to that look, and during the intervention I asked colleagues to at least clean up the place. We waited for the development of her health, and during the wait the primary was to share her feelings.

Is this a common practice?

Not exactly. Under normal circumstances, I wouldn't stay with the lady that long. In these cases, I always try to find the immediate family who can stay with the person and could provide him with the proper support and share with them. It is also good to consider whether it is good for them to stay at home that day. Alternatively, ask a family member to spend the night together if panic or any other complications begin to appear during the night.

Source: Police Psychology Department